

# **RESPONSE OF THE U.S. BISHOPS**

## **U.S. Bishops' President Condemns Violent Protest and Prays for Safety as Chaos Threatens U.S. Capitol USCCB, January 6, 2021**

**WASHINGTON:** Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued the following statement in response to today's violence in the United States Capitol.

**"I join people of good will in condemning the violence today at the United States Capitol. This is not who we are as Americans. I am praying for members of Congress and Capitol staff and for the police and all those working to restore order and public safety.**

**"The peaceful transition of power is one of the hallmarks of this great nation. In this troubling moment, we must recommit ourselves to the values and principles of our democracy and come together as one nation under God. I entrust all of us to the heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she guide us in the ways of peace, and obtain for us wisdom and the grace of a true**

**patriotism and love of country.”** ([USSCB, January 6, 2020](#)).

**NOTICE: There is no mention of the role President Trump played in inciting the violent protest and the storming of the Capitol, nor his false claims that the election was fraudulent, nor of the president's effort to overturn a legitimate democratic election**

## **ANOTHER CATHOLIC RESPONSE**

**An editorial in *America Magazine* on January 6, 2021, provides a more comprehensive and insightful Catholic analysis of Trump's insurrection and attempted coup. The actions of the president and the protesters at the Capitol are described as an "outrage." "It is contrary to everything this country stands for and represents a clear and present danger to the constitutional order of this country. This attempt to disrupt and destroy the democratic process should be repugnant to the hearts of all Americans and must be denounced from every platform and pulpit in the country."**

**The editorial goes on to point out that president Trump, with his lies about the election being fraudulent and his attempt to overturn the 2020 election, was the main cause of the insurrection and the violence of the protesters. The editorial also maintains that those Christians, and I would add specifically Catholics, who believed the lies of the president and who supported his efforts to overturn the election are complicit in Trump's insurrection**

and failed coup. In the words of the article, "The harm to the credibility of the Christian witness is deep and will be long-lasting. Christian leaders, the U.S. Catholic bishops among them, must clearly condemn this misuse of faith. And all Christians should repent for the ways that we have allowed the symbols of the Christian faith to be drafted into Mr. Trump's service." (*America Magazine.*)

## **THE USCCB AND THE POLITICALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has politicized the Gospel at the expense of failing to provide pastoral and theological vision for Catholics in the United States. To a great extent the cause for this is rooted in the divisions that exist among the bishops themselves. Politically, they are divided between those who actively supported the re-election of Donald Trump, including, by some, his efforts to overturn the election, and those who accept and support the election of Joe Biden. Theologically, they are divided by their rejection or acceptance of Pope Francis' vision of reform for the Catholic Church. The bishops' critical of Pope Francis represent a substantial majority and they have been able to effectively overrule the voices of the pro-Francis bishops who are presently in a minority. No U.S. bishop appointed by Francis has ever been elected to a top leadership position in the USCCB. The Catholic faithful in the United States are also divided on the same lines as the bishops.

The leadership of the U.S. Conference of Bishops has been guided more by political concerns than by the pastoral and ministerial needs of the faithful. In the process the bishops' conference has lost its credibility and effectiveness among many Catholics in the United States. The conference is in need of a

**renewed ecclesial and theological vision in order to serve more effectively the spiritual and pastoral needs of Catholics in the United States today.**

**For a more extensive discussion of these issues, see Massimo Faggioli, “Lots of Politics, Little Legitimacy: The USCCB Needs an Ecclesial and Theological Vision,” [Commonweal](#), January 28, 2021.**